UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

For participants only

E/1992/SR.17
14 July 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1992

High-level segment

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 8 July 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland)

CONTENTS

Enhancing international cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system (continued)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (E/1992/27, 40, 64 and 82 and Add.1)

Mr. RISTIMAKI (Finland), speaking on behalf of the delegations of the Nordic countries, said that those delegations were in favour of the proposal made by the representative of Pakistan for the establishment of a working group at ambassadorial level to examine, on the basis of a summary prepared by the President of the Council, the issues raised during the high-level segment of the Council's current session. The working group would greatly facilitate the discussion of relevant issues and proposals at the next session of the General Assembly.

Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that, after the representative of Pakistan had put forward his proposal, Baroness Chalker of Wallasey, the United Kingdom Minister of Overseas Development, had discussed it with members of the other European Community delegations, who agreed that, in view of the urgent need to revitalize the Organization's role in development assistance, an open-ended ad hoc working group should be formed to hold consultations in September in order to arrive at action-oriented recommendations to the General Assembly.

Mr. BOLTON (United States of America), Mr. MALONE (Canada), Mr. ISAKOV (Russian Federation) and Mr. HUSSEIN (Ethiopia) said that they supported the proposal of the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. SETH (India) said that his delegation was in broad agreement with the proposal. One area of concern, however, was whether the President would have enough time to prepare a summary which would adequately reflect the views expressed during the high-level segment of the Council's session.

Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) said that he also supported the proposal. However, it might be appropriate to submit a draft decision for the establishment of the working group so that all delegations were aware of its objectives and mandate.

Mr. ARCILLA (Philippines) said that he agreed with the representative of Peru. It might also be useful to determine whether the working group would report to the Council or directly to the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT said that there seemed to be unanimous support for the Pakistan proposal, and that he would prepare an appropriate text as soon as possible.

Mr. ADALA (Observer for Kenya) said that the serious problems and contradictions that still characterized the world economy and international trade called for a new partnership in cooperation for development, based on mutual acceptance of obligations and responsibilities. In that context, his delegation strongly supported the reservation expressed by the Chairman of the Group of 77 in his statement to the Council, at its fourteenth meeting, regarding the attempt to redefine the development priorities of the developing countries and to restrict the scope of international development cooperation to operational activities. Respect for the principle of the sovereignty of States should remain a prime consideration in partnership for development.

Referring to section III.D, entitled "Humanitarian and emergency system assistance", in the report of the Secretary-General to the Council on enhancing the role of the United Nations system on international cooperation for development (E/1992/82), he said that his delegation welcomed the inter-agency appeal recently launched by the new Emergency Relief Coordinator in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Eliasson, on behalf of Kenya. It was to be hoped that the international community would respond generously to the appeal, and lend its support to the efforts being made by the heads of State of Kenya, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Djibouti to find a lasting solution to problems in the Horn of Africa in general, and Somalia in particular.

Mr. GRANT (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) said that the goal set by the World Summit for Children of saving some 50 million children from death by disease and malnutrition by the end of the decade was part of an overall effort to address population concerns, to diminish the apartheid agenda, to advance sustainable development, and thereby enhance the prospects for democracy. The United Nations system could and must play a key role in meeting those challenges, but to do so it must strengthen not only the links within the system itself, but its partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions. In that process, the revitalized Economic and Social Council could play an important role.

In his report on enhancing international cooperation for development (E/1992/82 and Add.1), the Secretary-General had stressed the need to improve governance in the operational activities of the United Nations. Other useful suggestions had been put forward by the Nordic countries in their memorandum contained in document E/1992/91. He himself had presented to the UNICEF Executive Board 10 proposals for reform of the United Nations on which he believed action could now be taken. The members of the Executive Board had felt that the proposals would be a useful input into the Council's deliberations, and he had circulated them to its members. The proposals emphasized the importance of mobilizing high-level political commitment and of strengthening the collaboration of the United Nations system at the country level. In addition, they advocated enhanced cooperation in the programming process of each agency, and specific recommendations for improving the resident coordinator system. There was also a specific recommendation for a major increase in the number of unified locations for the United Nations system's field offices.

The Executive Board also clearly recognized the importance of maintaining each organization's capacity to act effectively: the diversity of mandates within the system could be a source of strength, if properly coordinated. Experience had similarly shown the need for a clearer chain of command and for Governments to have direct access to expertise and to decision makers in donor countries.

(Mr. Grant)

At its current session, the Economic and Social Council had before it the first test of whether Governments would succeed in fulfilling their commitments with the active guidance of the Council and the General Assembly. The report submitted by the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children (E/1992/71) reflected a most heartening beginning, and over 130 countries had prepared or were preparing national programmes of action to implement the goals of the Summit. The challenge confronting the Council and the other central organs of the United Nations was to provide the governance, leadership and policy guidance without which those goals could not be achieved.

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) said that the world economic situation left little room for optimism, and that the adjustment and liberalization effort made by many developing countries had not received an appropriate response and support from the developed North. It was also a matter of great concern that some developed countries had drastically reduced, and even diverted, their official development assistance. The further marginalization of the developing countries had thus become a grim reality.

It was clear that, for development to succeed, it required both a stable political environment and a favourable external economic climate. The United Nations should play an active role not only in maintaining peace and security, but also in promoting the development without which peace could not be sustained. The guiding principles for that role had been set out in a variety of United Nations documents, and those commitments should be honoured in full. His delegation could not agree with the notion that the Organization's function in international cooperation for development should be limited to a few specific areas of concern.

The improvement and strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the development field must include the necessary reform of the Organization itself, and his delegation had taken note of the various proposals aimed at restructuring the economic and social sectors of its operational activities. China took a favourable view of all proposals intended to enhance international cooperation, especially those that were conducive to the

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

development of the developing countries. However, reform measures within the United Nations should be compatible with the principle of the sovereignty of States, and they should also ensure a rational division of labour among the various United Nations development agencies and programmes. The principles of multilateralism, neutrality and universality must be maintained, and there should be no attempt to attach political strings to assistance provided through the United Nations system. Restructuring should be seen as a gradual process and major reform measures must be fully debated and discussed, and decided upon by consensus.

In conclusion, he said that his delegation supported the proposal of the representative of Pakistan for the convening of a working group.

Ms. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that, as had been stressed in the statements made by heads of delegations, and as had been underscored in the proposals put forward by the Nordic countries on enhancing operational activities for development (E/1992/91), the strengths of the United Nations were shown to their best advantage when the Organization operated in an integrated and coordinated fashion. The Secretary-General's proposed reorganization of the Secretariat was a positive move in that direction. The United Nations itself, the specialized agencies and the international financial institutions must function as a coherent whole, within the common conceptual framework provided by the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

At the country level, the priority must be to build up the capacity of Governments to coordinate assistance, and to facilitate coordination by all possible means, as and when Governments submitted their requests. Priorities, goals and strategies must be decided within the national country programme context, and in accord with the principles of General Assembly resolution 44/211.

Some notable efforts in that regard had been made in a number of countries where the United Nations resident coordinators and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) were playing an active role. The resident

(Ms. Sadik)

coordinator system still needed strengthening, and she fully agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal that there should be a single United Nations representation in each country. The coordinator should represent the entire United Nations system, but could continue to operate under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the Secretary-General. If the resident coordinators were to carry out their function effectively, their selection must be a transparent process. They should be well-qualified managers with substantive development experience, which in particular cases might need to be country-specific. As the current chairperson of JCGP, she was committed to advancing harmonization of programmes and encouraging mutually supportive policies and programmes.

In order to ensure coordination among all organizations involved in operational activities, a legislative body such as an international development council was needed, as proposed by the Nordic countries. For development to be effective, however, coordination was needed among all contributors to action programmes, including the specialized agencies. That was a task for which the projected commission on sustainable development would be well suited, providing normative and substantive guidance, while the proposed international development council focused on operational matters.

Furthermore, the different agencies and organizations should have their own governing bodies responsible for guiding implementation of overall development goals and with equal representation of developing and developed countries. The emphasis should be on policy advice rather than micromanagement.

The Nordic reform proposals were appealing because they sought to link reform of governance and financing, issues which were closely interrelated. Additional resources for development activities were urgently required and more secure funding was needed to ensure stable programming. In that connection the proposal for a three-tier financing system had great merit.

She underlined the link between peace-building and development stressed by the Secretary-General in his new vision for development. She agreed with him that the Organization's actions must address not only the immediate but

(Ms. Sadik)

also the underlying causes of conflicts, which, in addition to political oppression, social injustice and blatant economic disparities, also included unchecked population growth.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria) said that his Government was convinced of the close relationship between the political and the socio-economic missions of the United Nations, and fully supported the restructuring and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council with a view to making the United Nations more effective in the social, economic and related fields.

With regard to the Organization's role in enhancing international cooperation for development, he said that in recent years the United Nations had been successful in forging a consensus on the key objectives of development, which must be people-centred, equitable and sustainable. As the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio had shown, it was no longer possible to focus on socio-economic development without also considering the environment. There was also a growing consensus that sustainable development could be achieved only through a new partnership between countries and groups of countries sharing a common but differentiated responsibility, within a framework provided by the United Nations. Given that the concept of an integrated approach to the political, economic and social missions was at the heart of its Charter, the United Nations was in a position to formulate integrated responses to the wide range of challenges it was facing; it was increasingly clear that such a response was vital if human suffering was to be relieved.

With the increasing globalization of the world economy, the United Nations could play a useful role in providing assessments and policy advice, particularly on cross-sectoral issues, thanks to the wealth of data at its disposal. It had also shown its capacity to mobilize the independent sector and grass-roots movements, particularly non-governmental organizations, whose enthusiasm and expertise would be vital in the quest for sustainable development, given that the problems involved could not be tackled solely by Governments.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Lastly, he commended the work of the Nordic countries and welcomed the positive response to their reform proposals. The potential of the Economic and Social Council to discharge the functions of the projected international development council should be carefully examined.

Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the promising opportunities offered by the new world situation, many problems remained. World output had declined for the first time since the Second World War and world trade had also slowed, while many developing countries were experiencing economic recession and its social and political consequences. High long-term interest rates were acting as a constraint on investment and growth in many developing countries, especially the Persian Gulf States, which were striving to rebuild their economies in the wake of two devastating wars in the region. Instability in the finance and banking sectors was jeopardizing the high levels of investment needed in both Eastern Europe and the Persian Gulf. However, world economic performance could be improved through the enhancement of international cooperation and policy coordination, which must remain the main objective of the United Nations.

The main United Nations contribution to international cooperation for development was the forum the Organization provided for dialogue and consensus on issues such as development, the environment, finance, trade and the transfer of technology. The General Assembly had a vital role to play in that connection and must be adjusted and, if necessary, reformed, in order to respond to new and emerging needs. However, such reform should not undermine its ability to meet the needs of the developing countries, but rather should make it more responsive to the alarming economic problems prevailing in those countries. In addition, the reform of the Economic and Social Council through the high-level segment and the policy dialogue, involving the heads of organizations within the system, should help promote the understanding necessary for cooperation and coordination of economic policies and programmes.

Lastly, United Nations operational activities should complement more effectively the national efforts of the developing countries in the field of indigenous capacity-building. He agreed with the Secretary-General that the

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

financing of operational activities should be placed on a more adequate and stable footing.

Mr. ARCILLA (Philippines) said that the recent historic changes in the world situation had underlined the interdependence between the economic, social and political spheres. In that context, the United Nations had a catalytic role to play in ensuring a coherent response by the international community.

The revitalization of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, together with the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the Secretariat, were intended to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations and provide a coherent policy direction for the various agencies active in the field of international development cooperation. Political will and dynamism were needed at the highest level in order to overcome the obstacles to the work of the various governing bodies and executive boards.

The Nordic United Nations project offered a constructive approach to reform, and the functions envisaged for the proposed international development council were commendable.

The Economic and Social Council needed to exercise more determined governance over its subsidiary organs, and the high-level segment was vital for that purpose. The Council should halt the proliferation of bureaucratic hierarchies which paralysed rather than facilitated effective implementation of decisions, and should utilize the comparative advantages of existing bodies and organs. In that connection, the role of the regional economic and social commissions in the field of policy formulation, implementation and coordination should be further reviewed and enhanced if necessary.

The aim was to create a coordinated, efficient, result-oriented operational system, making optimum use of scarce resources and avoiding duplication of functions.

It was also vital to invest in people, with a view to national capacity-building, in order to help more countries to become participants in the international economy rather than aid recipients. His own country's new Government was committed to the pursuit of economic growth and development in

(Mr. Arcilla, Philippines)

its policies and programmes, but its efforts would need the support of the international community.

Greater coordination was also needed between the United Nations system and other multinational institutions, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions. The latter's structural reform programmes often resulted in severe economic and political hardships which other United Nations agencies were subsequently required to alleviate, and a more coordinated international response to development was necessary.

It was important to recognize the pressing importance of debt relief both for the least developed countries and for low- and middle-income countries such as his own, as well as the need for greater access to industrialized countries' markets and improved terms of trade.

Mr. DRAPER (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that peace, security and development were intertwined and of equal importance to international development cooperation. No meaningful reform could be achieved without a political transaction involving all Member Governments of the United Nations, both developed and developing. The Earth Summit in Rio had shown what could be done when the political will existed, but real success would be judged by the ability of countries to carry out programmes at the national level. That could come about when national capacities were strengthened and additional resources found. Although the United Nations system had a crucial role to play, it could only play that role if it was given the necessary structure, governance and means.

Building on the reform programme initiated by the Secretary-General, he had developed a number of proposals for the restructuring and reform of the United Nations development system, dealing mainly with operational activities. First, a single United Nations country office was needed under the authority of a single resident coordinator, appointed by and reporting directly to the Secretary-General and with overall responsibility for the preparation of a single country strategy. Individual funds and programmes would be part of the new structure, each with specific and clearly defined responsibilities. At headquarters level, maximum decentralization should be pursued, together with close coordination among all field office partners. Individual roles and mandates must be clearly spelled out to avoid duplication.

(Mr. Draper)

More efficient governance should be achieved through a single high-level policy body responsible for programmes and funds, with separate small executive bodies providing operational guidance to individual organizations. Consistent system-wide personnel policies should be designed to attract and retain talented staff, with equal career opportunities and conditions of service for all. Finally, modernization would serve no purpose unless adequate resources were provided. To be effective, the United Nations development system needed predictable and significantly increased multi-year resource flows.

For the United Nations to be relevant to the national development process, there must be a single country strategy, based on national objectives and designed, in collaboration with the Government, by the entire United Nations system under the resident coordinator's leadership. The Governments of Bolivia, Malawi, Pakistan and Yemen had inspired the constituent organizations of JCGP in innovative joint programming, whose initial results had been promising and could be seen as a precursor of the development of unified United Nations strategies. The resident coordinator must not be a political United Nations ambassador but should focus on development, continuing to report directly to the Secretary-General and remaining responsible for coordinating development activities of United Nations funds and programmes. He or she must be supported by adequate financial resources and well-functioning headquarters, and have the policy and operations guidance of the individual programmes and funds.

UNDP's field network would support the resident coordinator's role in coordinating the work of the entire United Nations system. The fusion of the role with that of resident representative was cost-effective, and linked coordination firmly to funding; that was consistent with UNDP's original mandate, reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 32/197, and in keeping with the Programme's multisectoral and management strengths.

It was clear that all programmes and funds must be more systematically integrated into the resident coordinator's function. One way to do so was to promote recruitment from the programmes and funds and, eventually, from the system as a whole.

(Mr. Draper)

He supported the idea of reforming and restructuring United Nations activities, on the basis of genuine consensus among developed and developing countries. General Assembly resolution 44/211 set forth the legislative framework for restructuring and reform; the remaining requirement was the existence of political will, which only the Member States, by their actions, could demonstrate.

Mr. AIT CHAALAL (Algeria) said that, although the issue of enhancing international cooperation for development had been under discussion for decades, the situation in the world as a whole, and in the developing countries in particular, continued to worsen each year. It was surely time to exercise political will by means of resolute action to give the Organization the means to accomplish its essential mission of promoting development and peace. The urgency of the situation was shown by the slow-down in world trade, the deterioration in commodity prices, persistent external indebtedness, and the extent of the financial needs of the former Soviet Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Action to revitalize international cooperation for development, and to promote the role of the United Nations system in that task, should focus first of all on the exercise of genuine political will. The statement made by the President of the Security Council at the Summit Meeting of the Council, in January 1992, had recognized the dynamic link between peace and development, and should be followed up by stronger efforts to bring the economic and social dimension permanently to the forefront of the Organization's concerns. On the success of efforts to revitalize growth in the developing countries would depend the credibility of any effort to consolidate the role of the United Nations in serving international peace and security.

Revitalizing and rationalizing the Council and reforming the Organization's economic and social sectors in general should not be allowed to obscure the problems facing the third world or to delay action to deal with them. General Assembly resolution 46/182, whose adoption had stemmed from the Council's discussions during its 1991 second regular session, provided the essential benchmark for coordinating humanitarian emergency assistance.

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, testified to the growing awareness of world interdependence and the need to restore international cooperation. Efforts to give the developing countries a greater share in world trade, to develop a debt strategy which took into account the needs of all indebted countries, the foremost of which was financial and investment flows, and to guarantee an external environment favourable to their domestic structural reforms, were tasks the Council should take up as part of its coordinating role in the United Nations system. Implementation of Agenda 21 would test the developed countries' political will and the Council's capacity to carry out and coordinate a programme of genuine international cooperation.

The United Nations system's operational activities formed one of the Organization's most important tasks. The Nordic countries' proposals for reform in that regard deserved constructive consideration, bearing in mind the need to improve the impact of such activities, in which consideration of the developing countries' national programmes and priorities must remain paramount.

The Council's role was to give effect to the new international consensus on development, by means of measures and commitments aimed at providing adequate facilities in a spirit of interdependence, equity and solidarity.

Mr. HANSENNE (Director-General, International Labour Organisation) said that it must be recognized that the United Nations system's impact in enhancing international cooperation for development was real but limited. Official development assistance was increasingly extended through bilateral rather than multilateral channels, the specialized agencies' budget and staffing levels were declining in real terms, and the level of overall extrabudgetary resources for technical cooperation was limited. The specialized agencies' contribution was, therefore, increasingly marginal, the more so when the resources made available in recent years to the Bretton Woods institutions were taken into account. That fact heightened the need for coordination, of the sort which stemmed from adherence by all to a jointly defined policy rather than from strengthening administration and bureaucracy.

(Mr. Hansenne, ILO)

Although the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was striving to adapt to member States' growing and evolving needs, and had consistently supported reform in technical cooperation, it cautioned against any tendency to bureaucratic centralization. In that context, he strongly endorsed the Secretary-General's emphasis on taking greater advantage of complementarities to contribute to common goals. It was important for each agency to work within its core mandate, and for all agencies to work in the same general direction. Greater convergence of approaches by the multilateral financial institutions was of particular importance. There had often been conflict between the measures of financial rigour insisted upon by the Bretton Woods institutions, even at the cost of social deterioration, and the social measures promoted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Unless there was much closer cooperation between the two groups, confusion and frustration would persist. ILO, which for some years had been exchanging information and views with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on the integration of social objectives into structural adjustment programmes, welcomed those institutions' growing attention to social issues. But progress in coordination with them required a joint effort; on that point, too, he strongly endorsed the Secretary-General's call for better policy coordination between the multilateral financial institutions and the other parts of the United Nations system. The development of an effective institutional mechanism for that purpose would be a major contribution by the Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

The new political climate presented an opportunity, as well as the responsibility, to provide consistent advice to Governments so as to promote economic growth, social justice, human rights and democracy. As he had said when addressing the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session, the Organization must reflect on an integrated concept of development which reconciled the need for economic rigour with the no less imperative need for greater social justice and respect for human rights. The Secretary-General's initiatives to promote an integrated approach deserved full support.

Mr. Chong-Ha YOO (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that during the past year the world had witnessed a profound change in the macroeconomic policies of many Asian, African and Latin American Governments. There had been substantial structural adjustments along the lines of liberalization, privatization and fiscal reform, and the extent to which State control had yielded to market forces around the world deserved special note. But the transition was causing hardship for many countries, owing not only to slow growth in world output but, fundamentally, to the lack of an adequate infrastructure for economic and social development. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report on enhancing international cooperation for development, the globalization of finance and production in many sectors had hampered Governments' ability to direct domestic economic and social change. The representative of Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, had rightly said that poverty eradication was essential to development. Since multilateral institutions did not have the necessary resources for development assistance on a global scale, investment flows played a crucial role in that regard; but the benefits were not being evenly distributed. The Commission on Transnational Corporations had indicated that foreign direct investment in the least developed countries was stagnating. Global institutions would have to play a greater role, therefore, in ensuring that investment flows and development objectives were considered together.

The United Nations system was looked to as the sole means of helping many peoples to realize their full potential. The United Nations could nurture political and economic stability; but in order to do so it must be prepared to strengthen itself and, like its Member States, be ready to carry out necessary reforms.

The United Nations system relied greatly on the specialized agencies and subsidiary organs of the Council, which should play a greater role in allocating responsibility and preventing overlap; the latter could very well undertake the responsibilities of an international development council of the sort proposed in the joint Nordic memorandum (E/1992/91). The General Assembly, however, remained the appropriate forum for decisions regarding mandates and overall objectives.

(Mr. Chong-Ha Yoo, Observer, Republic of Korea)

Although an improved division of labour would appear to centralize decision-taking in the Council, Member States must define needs and priorities at the country level, and the unified inter-agency approach must be developed accordingly on a country-programming basis. To that end, the resident coordinator system must be further integrated into the overall operational strategy; the ACC Committee on Field Activities had carried out an important overhaul in that regard. The initiatives proposed by the UNDP Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session for the resident coordinator system deserved positive consideration.

The joint Nordic memorandum had defined various alternatives to ensure a balanced distribution of the economic burdens associated with operational activities. His delegation agreed that a more systematic means of generating the relevant funds must be sought to augment the voluntary contributions currently the sole source of financing for United Nations agencies and organs, and that UNDP, rather than being regarded as the central financing body for technical assistance, should focus on its comparative advantage and emphasize human resources development and institution-building. The question of comparative advantage had also been raised, during the current high-level meetings, with reference to a division of labour between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations. The expectations of the United Nations system were currently higher than ever; peace and security were clearly inseparable from economic and social development. The reforms of the United Nations system must be successfully completed in order to establish the well-being necessary for global harmony.

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic) said that unless the new world order included a special effort to eradicate poverty and narrow the gap between industrial and developing countries, it would not be viable. For that reason, and in view of the changes taking place and the hopes to which they were giving rise, true international cooperation was indispensable by way of a regional response to those changes, and in that respect the work of the United Nations was fundamental.

(Mr. Shaheed, Syrian Arab Republic)

As the purpose of the current high-level segment of the Council's session was to examine the role of the United Nations in enhancing international cooperation for development, it was essential to identify the fundamental problems hindering development in developing countries so as to be able to deal with them in a direct and definitive manner. The areas towards which international cooperation might be directed included foreign indebtedness, international trade, basic commodities, human resources development, foreign aid and the environment.

Despite their differing concerns, all countries had a genuine common interest in establishing monetary and trade systems that were more open, more sound and more just, creating stabler markets for basic commodities, finding a comprehensive, lasting solution to the debt crisis and guaranteeing sustainable development through effective international cooperation in solving environmental problems.

Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Arab territories, which were subjected to daily hostilities, had resulted in an alarming deterioration in Arab living conditions and deprived the Arabs of their economic, social and cultural rights. Israel's aim was to expel the Arabs and seize their lands and natural resources and subjugate them for the purposes of an occupation based on expansionism and colonization. When Israeli aggression made it necessary for the Arabs to allocate a large portion of their resources to meeting the minimum requisites of defence, how could one talk about development?

Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations clearly recognized the Organization's role in promoting international economic and social cooperation. It was reasonable, therefore, to expect the Organization to assume the primary responsibility for the development of the developing countries, particularly at a time when economic conditions in those countries were deteriorating at a disturbing rate. What was required of the United Nations, more than ever before, was to assume a leading role in international cooperation for development, for it was the agency in charge of planning, coordination, financing and execution.

(Mr. Shaheed, Syrian Arab Republic)

Therefore it was essential, at the current juncture, to enable the United Nations to promote international cooperation, which constituted the foundation of its Charter, with greater justice and equality in all fields, especially at a time when the end of the cold war enabled mankind to channel enormous financial resources into economic and social development. That would not be possible unless the Organization was delivered from its constant economic crisis.

Mr. BOOH BOOH (Observer for Cameroon) said that, the conclusions of the Council's high-level meetings, which stemmed from open, democratic debate, should be taken into account by institutions in preparing their policies. His delegation therefore welcomed the proposal made by the delegation of Pakistan. With regard to policy and programme implementation, ACC and its specialized committees should play a pivotal role in deliberations and in coordinating the implementation of decisions. A centralized body might seem advisable in order to ensure effective coordination and coherence in system-wide activities; such a structure, however, could have disadvantages such as rigidity and conflict between central and peripheral bodies. Therefore, the new machinery should be flexible enough to coordinate institutions and integrate their resources and plans of action. He welcomed the move to enhance the role of the resident coordinators, as well as the decision to regard national plans and priorities as the main focus of external assistance; such measures would not only lead to more coherent action but also meet the beneficiary countries' most pressing needs.

Failure in the past to give effect to the international community's undertakings, and the lack of machinery and resources, had been major stumbling-blocks to international cooperation for development. The campaigns against drugs and to promote human rights, however, showed what the Organization could do to improve its performance in implementing development programmes. After the disappointment of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, it was to be hoped that the organizations in the United Nations system would be given the budgetary means to implement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

(Mr. Booh Booh, Observer, Cameroon)

Reform and revitalization of the United Nations system should make it more action-oriented, enhancing the specialization and complementarity of its organizations, the better to meet Member States' needs. The emerging new world order called for a new balance in international economic relations, so as to consolidate peace and promote lasting development, through renewed international cooperation under the enhanced authority of the United Nations.

Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) said that the World Economic Survey, 1992 noted a lack of real growth and a worsening of economic and social conditions in almost every region of the developing world. In Africa, in particular, the situation was particularly disquieting as a result of deteriorating terms of trade and the debt burden, aggravated by famine and drought.

World economic management had become ever more complex owing to the globalization of economic activity and the impact of economic regrouping. The structures and patterns of international economic relations had undergone profound change. New challenges were posed by the movement to democracy, by the question of assistance to countries in transition and to those affected by strife, and by the pursuit of sustainable development with the elimination of poverty and protection of the environment. Attention to those issues should not divert the international community from its duty to help developing countries overcome the major economic difficulties they already faced.

The problems were such that they could be resolved only through increased international cooperation. The United Nations Charter, in Article 55, contained clearly defined economic and social goals, and the Assembly, at its sixth special session, on a new international economic order, had called for changes in the main sectors of the world economy intended to strengthen the economies of the developing countries and establish a system for the global management of international development. In practice, such a structural approach had been abandoned in favour of partial adjustments and a crisis-management approach with ad hoc remedies. Equally, the hopes born of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, on international economic cooperation, had not been confirmed at the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, or at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Nevertheless, there was increasing recognition of the reality of interdependence, and of the economic development of the developing countries as an essential goal of international economic cooperation, as well as of the close links between economic and political matters on the one hand, and development, security and peace on the other.

Great stress had been placed on good management and democracy. If, at the national level, developing countries had been bold enough to undertake reform in that direction, there seemed no reason why at the international level jointly agreed rules and systems based on equality and respect for sovereignty, mutual benefit and joint responsibility could not be established.

The United Nations, as a universal forum, should play the central role in coordination and management. A clear view should be developed of the division of responsibilities between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. His delegation supported the restructuring endeavours envisaged by the General Assembly and welcomed the recent reforms undertaken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Madagascar also welcomed the global management of operational activities for development with a view to mobilizing additional resources, provided that the principle of democracy was respected.

Strengthening of the system also implied organizational improvements within the Secretariat, the reform of which should go hand in hand with the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery. So as to promote an integrated approach to development, the institutional framework for economic and social cooperation should be expanded to encompass all the actors involved, including multilateral agencies.

His delegation trusted that a consensus would emerge along those lines, a consensus that would reflect a willingness on the part of States to meet the aspirations of peoples for social progress and better standards of living within a broader freedom.

Mr. CISSE (Observer for Senegal) said that it was difficult to discuss the role of the United Nations in enhancing international cooperation for development without stressing the priority to be given to economic growth

(Mr. Cisse, Observer, Senegal)

in the developing countries, particularly in Africa. The developing countries' negative economic indicators spoke for themselves. The difficulties faced by the African countries in promoting economic growth were largely due to restricted market access, dwindling financial flows, restrictions on the transfer of technology, and indebtedness.

The first step towards rectifying that situation was to implement the many resolutions and programmes adopted by the United Nations to promote international cooperation for development. Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was an imperative necessity. Secondly, peace and security went hand in hand with economic progress and respect for human rights. The elimination of poverty and of the inequalities prevailing in the world economic system was an essential element in the maintenance of peace and security.

His delegation did not agree that the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council should result in the elimination of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. While there was scope for rationalization, account should be taken of the responsibilities for economic and social matters conferred by the Charter upon the Assembly, which remained the most democratic and universal organ.

Senegal welcomed the Nordic proposals regarding an international development council and burden-sharing with regard to the financing of development. With respect to the regional commissions, there was a need for an integrated approach and for their resources to be increased. The proposal to unify United Nations representation at the country level would lead to greater efficiency, but must not result in any reduction in the financial or human resources available to the various programmes.

Lastly, his delegation welcomed the proposals for a world summit for social development, and for international conferences on development financing and on population and development, all of which should serve to promote international cooperation for development and social progress.

Mr. AKSIN (Turkey) said that the recent transformation of the world scene made it even more necessary for the Economic and Social Council to review its functioning so as to better meet the requirements of Member States.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

The ad hoc growth of the economic structure of the United Nations had resulted in bewildering complexity, compartmentalization and duplication. Since economic and social development were as important as peace and security in attaining the purposes of the Charter, a properly functioning Economic and Social Council was as essential as a properly functioning Security Council. There was general agreement that in economic terms the United Nations had not performed as foreseen in the Charter. The time had come to change that situation and restore the role of the United Nations in development.

There were two dimensions: the conceptual aspect relating to policy-making, and the practical aspect of activities geared towards implementation. His delegation had noted the Nordic proposal to establish an international development council, but thought that the functions that would be assigned to it could be carried out without creating a new body. The new Economic and Social Council could serve as the setting for consideration of development issues.

More focus was needed in the selection of the theme for the high-level segment of the Council's session; the theme selected for the current session was perhaps too general. Follow-up to decisions originating at the high-level segment should be left to the General Assembly, where the total membership of the Organization was represented. The operational activities segment should also be useful in examining relevant issues.

His delegation agreed that the regional commissions had a useful role to play in the new set-up and that their work should be reorganized accordingly. He also agreed that economic issues should be discussed only once, either in the Council or in the Second Committee. The agenda of the Economic Committee of the Council should be reviewed in conjunction with that of the Second Committee of the General Assembly. Lastly, his delegation supported the Pakistan proposal to establish an ad hoc working group, as a follow-up to the high-level segment.

Mr. NAKAJIMA (Director-General, World Health Organization) said that the World Health Organization (WHO), as a specialized agency, was responsible for field interventions that related to some degree to the four areas for action delineated by the Secretary-General in his report to the high-level

(Mr. Nakajima, WHO)

segment: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. Similarly, WHO, by the very nature of its specialized field of competence, was entrusted with a triple function: prevention, on-the-spot action in the face of immediate need, and health promotion and development. Further, WHO was expected to assume world leadership for the definition of health-related standards and health objectives and policies, as well as to act as a coordinator for the delivery of health services under its programme of cooperation with developing countries.

Such experience raised the question of the practicality of overly restricting the operational role and leeway for initiative of the specialized agencies, the Economic and Social Council, the various United Nations programmes and funds, and the Bretton Woods institutions. Perhaps the central concept to be applied was that of "human security", whereby peace would be not just the absence of armed conflict, but would be viewed in terms of the general welfare of all human beings. The United Nations should rally round such an integrated approach to human security. That presupposed the genuine reuniting, through concerted action, of the United Nations itself, the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. The high-level segment clearly showed the desire of Member States for reform of the United Nations system as a whole. WHO, for its part, had established a working group on the question, and would work closely with the Secretary-General of the United Nations to reform ACC.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.